

# Cape sundew

*Drosera capensis*

## Family

Droseraceae (sundew)

## Where is it originally from?

South Africa

## What does it look like?

Upright, tufted perennial herb with numerous, linear green leaves (<6.5 cm long) covered with tentacle-like red hairs and tipped with a sticky sap growing in a rosette straight from the base of the plant rosette. Leaves curl around captured insects. Dark pink flowers form spikes (<35 mm tall).

## Are there any similar species?

Cape sundew is distinguished from New Zealand native sundews by its dark pink flowers on long flower spikes. Also, forked sundew (*Drosera binata*) has forked, strap-like leaves and white flowers, while *D. auriculata* and shield sundew (*D. peltata*) have their sticky trap leaves in rosettes and also along the flowering stems.

## Why is it weedy?

Wide habitat range, with its insect prey providing a source of nutrients which allow it to colonise infertile habitats (nutrient-poor soils) usually resistant to weed invasion. It can then spread rapidly by seed.

## How does it spread?

Seed spread, possibly assisted by birds. Likely to have been deliberately planted in some natural areas.

## What damage does it do?

Grows well in a range of New Zealand wetlands, displacing small native plant species including native sundews.

## Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Nutrient-poor wetlands. Tolerates a wide range of low-nutrient habitats, from dune lakes to alpine herb-fields.

## What can I do to get rid of it?

Contact Department of Conservation if you find this plant growing in natural areas. No control methods found.



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Photo: J Boow



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